

CASE STUDY

Driving administrative efficiency and elevating the family experience Emmaus Christian College | South Plympton, South Australia



Emmaus Christian College is an independent school located in South Plympton, South Australia. The college provides co-educational, non-denominational Christian education from early learning through to year 12. Emmaus was established in 1979 with 29 students and 3 teachers; today, the school has more than 700 students and 55 teachers. A second campus at Brooklyn Park will open in 2020. Emmaus prides itself on providing a balanced curriculum that prepares students for a wide range of career paths.

> THE CHALLENGE

While Emmaus had historically enjoyed strong collection rates for school fee payments, their payment process was very labor intensive. Most families made direct debit payments on a day nominated by the school. However, the administration to support these processes was significant, particularly at end-of-year. Emmaus's finance and administration teams spent weeks reconciling an Excel spreadsheet, printing and sending fee forms to each family, then chasing the return of these forms to begin the end-of-year process. Once forms were returned, paper invoices were created and mailed to each family; the length of the process meant these were often amended with handwritten notes before being sent. Visibility of cash flow was limited, and forecasting was a time-consuming paper-based process.

The school needed a solution that would reduce the work involved in collecting payments, provide families with a better experience and give their team more comprehensive information for monitoring cash flow and forecasting.

"Our old approach was incredibly time-consuming and inefficient. We needed a solution that simplified the process for both the school and families," said Sarah Ciuk, Senior Finance & Administration Officer.

> THE SOLUTION

With student numbers growing, managing fee payments efficiently and identifying hardship cases early was becoming increasingly important. Emmaus understood that when moving to a new system, guidance, planning and preparation were important, and valued that the FACTS team spent time getting to understand their challenges and worked closely with them throughout implementation.

"The first year was an intensive learning curve. We needed to master the system, import our fees and communicate to families to ensure a smooth transition. The FACTS team supported us every step of the way," said Sarah.

With the FACTS dashboard, Emmaus can monitor their cash flow easily and identify families that are slow to pay and may need assistance. FACTS also provides a secure, compliant payment experience.

"Moving into year two, the rollover was seamless and comprehensively supported by the helpdesk, who are second-to-none in terms of their responsiveness," said Sarah.

> THE RESULTS

Today, Emmaus Christian College has **98% of families on payment plans** via FACTS and their **delinquency debt is less than 1.5%**. The FACTS dashboard provides up-to-date cash flow and forecasting information that they rely on heavily; previously, they had little visibility of these aspects without significant manual work.

Feedback from families has also been positive - they feel FACTS is easy to use and are happy to have more flexibility regarding the timing of their payments. Before, the school processed payments on Fridays only; now families can choose the day that's most convenient for them. They also have the option to create a custom plan if none of the standard plans are suitable for them.

"With FACTS, we've reduced a process that used to take us months to a few days, gained significant insights around our cash flow, reduced our delinquency debt and elevated our parent experience," said Sarah.